



**COUNCILLOR
STUART WHITTINGHAM**

CABINET

26 March 2018

**HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL
MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2018/19**

Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport said:

“The quality of roads and highways is a big priority for residents, which of course puts it at the top of our agenda, too. Wirral residents expect to travel on a transport network which is safe, efficient and of a high quality.

I believe that is exactly what we deliver and I am delighted that we are now in a position to go even further. Wirral has been awarded £2,625,000 to ensure our transport infrastructure is fit for the future – improving our roads and making sure Wirral residents benefit from a first rate highway network.

This investment will help bring about further growth in our economy and ensure road users across Wirral continue to experience efficient and safer journeys on our networks”.

REPORT SUMMARY

On the 2nd February, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority awarded £2,625,000 of Highways Maintenance Funding to Wirral Council to support investment in our highways assets. This report seeks Cabinet approval to accept the £2,625,000 and allocate it between the Bridges and Roads/Footway elements of the network. The report also requests approval of the detailed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2018/19.

This funding will support the delivery of the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy and the Wirral Plan pledge to provide transport and technology infrastructure fit for the future, and will ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commuter to work.

The maintenance of highways is a statutory duty for the Council under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

This is a key decision and all wards are affected.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Cabinet is requested to:

- (1) Approve the acceptance of £2,625,000 of Highway Maintenance Funding for 2018/19, awarded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority at its meeting of 2 February 2018;
- (2) Approve the proposed allocation of the Highway Maintenance Funding 2018/19 between Bridges and Roads/Footways;
- (3) Approve the detailed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2018/19 outlined in the Appendix 1;
- (4) Authorise the Strategic Commissioner for Environment in conjunction with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to be able to make necessary adjustments to the programme should the need arise due to financial, asset condition or other factors.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Allocations for capital highway maintenance funding are now made from the transport fund element of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority's Single Investment Fund (SIF).
- 1.2 The investment in the maintenance of the highway network will enable the Council to comply with its statutory duty to maintain the highway. The establishment of a prioritised programme allows both transparency that the Council is addressing those highway elements in greatest need of maintenance and proper management of the allocated finances, and to permit co-ordination of roadworks with the utilities' programmes of work.
- 1.3 Winter salting and freeze/thaw action has a detrimental effect on the condition of highway surfaces, allowing further degradation due to the ingress of water, and asset condition priorities may change as a consequence of the current winter's weather.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 None. The programme is based on meeting the highest priority needs within the funding available against the condition and assessment criteria.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The highway network and other transport infrastructure assets together represent by far the largest capital asset the Council holds, and the value of replacing those assets is estimated to be £2.48 billion. The highway network for which Wirral Council is responsible comprises approximately 1,200 kilometres of road.

3.2 Single Investment Fund - Highway Maintenance Allocation 2018/19

All £26.5 million of LCR transport funds now form part of the Single Investment Fund (SIF) which is governed by an Assurance Framework. In 2016/17 it was agreed that this funding would be allocated to districts formulaically without the need for further prioritisation.

At the meeting of the Combined Authority on 2nd February 2017 it was further agreed that this approach would be generally retained, however with the additional establishment of an allocation of funding specifically for the LCR Key Route Network, which is the agreed network of strategic roads across the City Region. As such £3 million of funding has been allocated to support interventions on the Key Route Network. These interventions will be identified based on the outputs of a LCR-wide Carriageway Asset Management Plan and will be the subject of a separate report to the Combined Authority later this year.

Following the allocation of the Key Route Network allocation the remainder of the Capital Maintenance funding has been distributed to the Authorities' using the

formulaic basis as per previous years. As such Wirral has been allocated £2,625,000.

3.3 The £2,625,000 allocation for 2018/19 is intended for all highway infrastructure maintenance. An assessment of the priority structural needs of the bridges and roads/footways elements of the network has been undertaken and the funding has been allocated accordingly. Funding for Street Lighting will be subject to a separate report.

3.4 Accordingly, Cabinet is now recommended to approve the following allocation of the Highway Maintenance block for 2018/19 as per Table 1 below.

		2018/19 Proposed allocation
Bridges	Stanley Wood Footbridge, Storeton & Brimstage Road Retaining Wall, other minor bridges capital works as identified	£150,000
Roads and Footways	See Appendix 1	£2,475,000
	Total	£2,625,000

Table 1: Allocation of the Highway Maintenance Capital Programme 2018/19

3.5 There is no formal agreement from the Combined Authority beyond 2018/19 financial year as to how these funds are allocated.

3.6 Network Condition and Assessment Criteria

In order to fulfil its duty to maintain the highway, it is necessary to consider how the Council will prioritise the maintenance schemes to be undertaken and what treatment the prioritised schemes should comprise in order to repair and prevent further deterioration of those lengths of road and footway. The following criteria are used in carrying out this analysis:

(i) In accordance with national best practice the Council undertakes surveys of the highway network in order to determine the condition of the carriageways.

(ii) Areas of constant repairs; mainly due to vehicle over-ride; are highlighted in the Highway Inspectors' safety inspections.

(iii) Particular roads brought to the Council’s attention, as warranting significant repair, by Constituency Committees, Ward Councillors, the public and Streetscene officers.

(iv) Feedback from the Council’s Term Maintenance Contractor regarding the suitability of different repair solutions depending on the existing road condition and use.

3.7 All Ward Councillors were given the opportunity to contribute to the proposed Structural Maintenance Programme for roads and footways and submit lists of roads they considered to be local priorities for significant repair. The programme of schemes is set out in the Appendix and Ward Councillor priorities are denoted on those schemes with a “C”.

3.8 From the surveys undertaken, the existing condition of the highway network is reported through a small number of former National Indicators (NI). Choices relating to structural repairs to carriageway surfacing is dependent on a number of factors including cost, traffic flows and type and the condition of the underlying road and foundation. Certain routes require more expensive and durable surfacing whereas in other cases the priority, particularly on relatively lowly trafficked routes, is to prevent further deterioration of the road surface by sealing against ingress of water, whilst restoring skid resistance.

3.9 The road condition network is shown on Table 2 and details the last six years. All the recorded measurements indicate the percentage of the network that requires immediate maintenance for each classification of road. The condition of the Principal and Non-Principal Classified roads are key measures in the achievement of the *Connecting Wirral* Transport Strategy.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Principal Roads	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Non-Principal Classified Roads	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Unclassified Roads	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%

Table 2: Condition Data – percentage of the network that requires immediate maintenance

3.10 Proposed Structural Maintenance Programme for 2018/19

The proposed Structural Maintenance Programme for roads and footways for 2018/19 is set out in the attached **Appendix 1** and has been prepared taking into account the funding described in Section 3.3 and the priorities assessed from the

criteria described in Section 3.6. All of the schemes in the programme have been identified from the surveys as requiring maintenance intervention now.

In line with Wirral's 2020 Plan and the Connecting Wirral Strategy in order to ensure our networks are safe and that we support healthy active travel, consideration will be given to developing a risk based programme of footway works for 2018/19 to improve accessibility and reduce trip hazards, often caused by tree roots. The focus will be on reconstructing selected areas of footways with high pedestrian movements (for example, outside schools, shops, doctor's surgeries and health centres) to maximise value for money and ensure a continuous improvement to a safe highway to enable residents to access local facilities and opportunities.

Cabinet should note that the list of schemes shown in the priority listing is greater than the proposed funding. This is to allow certainty of priority yet flexibility to extend/alter the proposed schemes to be delivered in the event that, for example, there are clashes with major utility activities, severe winter damage to certain roads, some scheme requirements/extent/costs are reduced or less costly treatment is selected when the schemes are prepared in detail.

3.11 Valuing the Benefits of Highways Maintenance

The Department for Transport (DfT) has published a model to value the benefits of maintenance that can be used by local highway authorities making decisions on maintenance funding; allowing local highway authorities to assess the economic cost and benefits of their proposed asset management strategies and compare between different options.

Whilst detailed modelling has yet to be carried out for Wirral's proposals, the DfT cite that compared with continued use of a current budget, a scenario of a temporarily increased budget provides a benefit in terms of reduced user costs of £2.70 (discounted) for each extra £1 spent on direct works costs. This helps to negate the impact of past years' revenue cuts. Similarly, reducing the budget for years resulted in a reduction in benefits of £2.90 for every £1 saved in direct costs.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Schemes identified in the programme will be funded from the Combined Authority's Single Investment Funding allocation and the Council's Capital Programme Bids, as set out in Section 3 above.

5.0 LEGAL

5.1 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty on the Council, as Highway Authority, to maintain highways at the public expense.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 STAFFING: Existing staff resources will be used for the detailed investigation, design and monitoring of these schemes. Maintenance activity will be carried out

through the Highway Services Contract or discrete contracts as appropriate.

6.2 ICT: None.

6.3 ASSETS: Preventative maintenance to the highway assets will increase their residual life and asset value, and future spending will be targeted to maintain the carriageway and bridges condition indicators at their current level.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The duty to maintain the highway is achieved in part through structural maintenance of carriageways, footways, bridges, highway structures and lighting and withdrawal or reduction of funding would mean that that duty would not be met to the same degree.

7.2 As with most highway authorities, the network is deteriorating, and without a structural maintenance programme to address the highest priority routes, then the network will deteriorate further, the asset value will decrease and the cost of carrying much greater maintenance at a later date will be disproportionately higher.

7.3 Withdrawal of funding would lead to the deterioration of the network. This would have an adverse effect on the amount of substantiated claims received by the authority for slips, trips and falls together with road traffic accidents.

7.4 There is no formal agreement from the Combined Authority beyond 2018/19 financial year as to how Highway Maintenance funds will be allocated.

7.5. Allocations to the Combined Authority post 2021 are subject to all LCR authorities improving their DfT Incentive Fund Self-Assessment to a Level 3 score. Currently Wirral Council are at Level 1 but as per the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy, are working to achieve Level 2 by the end of March 2018. Further work to achieve Level 3 has then been programmed to be undertaken in the following 18 months.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION

8.1 Local Ward Councillors have been consulted as described in Section 3.7.

8.2 Prior to the end of the Term Contract, the Council's Highway Services Contractor will be consulted on the solutions proposed to address maintenance needs and the timing of specific programmes of work.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – *(insert appropriate hyperlink)*.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Proposed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2018/19

REFERENCE MATERIAL

United Kingdom Pavement Management Systems (UKPMS) Survey Condition Data held by the report author.

Single Data List Items (Former National Indicators N.I.168, N.I.169 and former BVPI 224b.) held by the report author.

DfT Guidance on the benefits of highway maintenance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-highways-maintenance-economic-costs-and-benefits-tool>

http://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/meetings/LCRCA_Agenda_020218.pdf

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Highway Maintenance Funding and Structural Maintenance Programme 2016/17	27 February 2017
Cabinet – Highway Maintenance Funding and Structural Maintenance Programme 2016/17	7 March 2016
Council – Budget	3 March 2016
Cabinet – Capital Programme and Financing 2016/19	22 February 2016

Council – Budget	24 February 2015
Cabinet - Highway Maintenance Funding and Structural Maintenance Programme 2015/16	10 February 2015
Cabinet – Capital Programme and Financing 2015/18	10 February 2015

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Briefings	Date
Cabinet Member Briefing – Revision to Structural Maintenance Programme 2015/16	19 October 2015